

Kirkpatrick, G. F.

Historical Sketches of Laurel Hill and
Smyrna Presbyterian Churches

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11
HISTORICAL SKETCHES
OF
LAUREL HILL AND SMYRNA
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

Compiled by
REV. G. F. KIRKPATRICK

Div. 8

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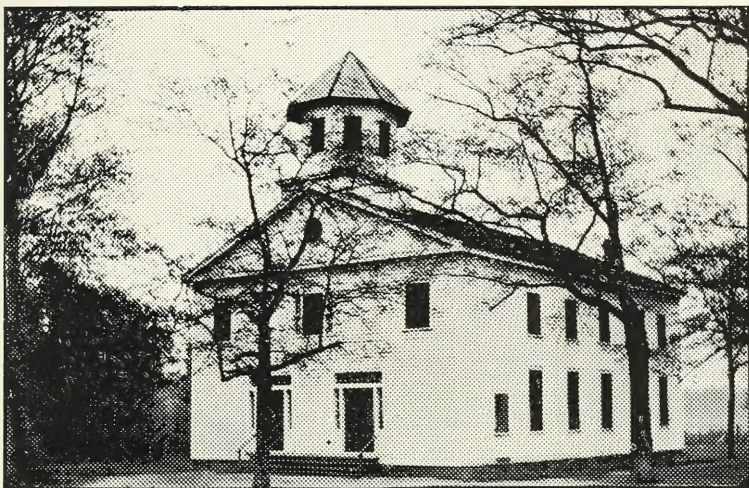
PREFACE

It has been the intention of the writer of these sketches to present only verified facts except when expressly stated otherwise. Naturally many who read these pages know the history of the churches better than the writer. If mistakes are found the writer trusts that the grace of kindly patience will be exercised; for having culled the subject matter from so many sources, it would be strange indeed if errors have not crept in and if worth-while facts have not been left out. It has required no little labor and research to assemble the facts. But it has been a labor of love—love not only for work of this character, but love, also, for the long-suffering, loyal, and kindly-hearted people with whom it has been my joy and good fortune to be associated in the Lord's work for nine years. If the reading of these sketches proves to be an incentive to nobler living and more earnest endeavor to build upon the foundation laid by godly men and women of other days, then the purpose for which they were written will have been fulfilled.

G. F. K.

August 7, 1931.



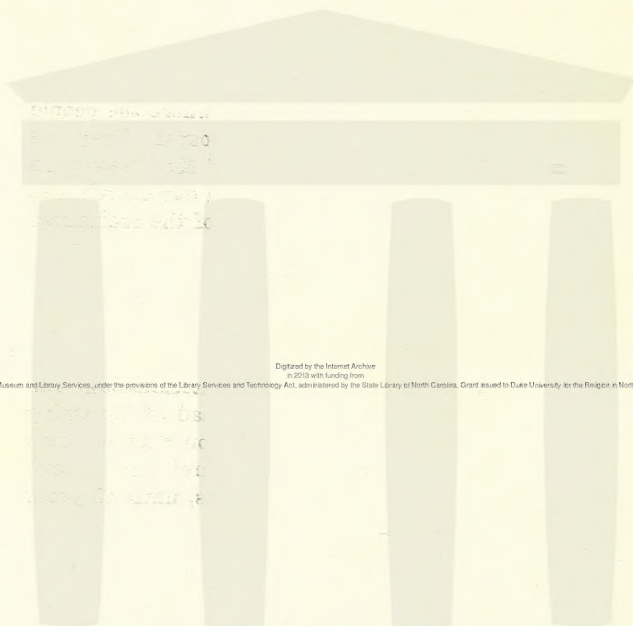


LAUREL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



SMYRNA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

THE UNIVERSITY OF
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LAUREL HILL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

At a meeting of the Synod of the Carolina in October, 1793, Rev. James Hall, of Iredell County, was appointed to investigate the religious conditions in Eastern North Carolina. A year later, in his report to Synod of his travels, we find this paragraph: "Your missionary set out on December 2nd, and as his attendance was necessary at the session of Presbytery in Robeson County, he preached at only three places on the way: One of these was in a Scotch settlement on the head of Drowning Creek where the people appear to be numerous and anxious to hear the Gospel. They are of the people who formerly constituted a part of Mr. Crawford's charge. He never had formed any connection with our church, has returned to Scotland, and the people are destitute of the ordinances of the Gospel. Since his removal one of our members baptized upwards of 70 children in one day on which he occasionally preached among them, shortly before they were visited by your missionary. The place of worship is at Mr. McFarland's on the way between Rockingham and Lumberton." Mr. Hall's reference to Drowning Creek is clearly an error as "the way between Rockingham and Lumberton" does not pass anywhere near "the head of Drowning Creek." However, Mr. Hall's preaching service on that occasion was held within a hundred yards of where Laurel Hill Church now stands; for the church is located on what was, until 40 years ago, the main road from Rockingham to Lumberton, and is just across the road from where the residence of Hon. Duncan McFarland stood at that time.

The "Mr. Crawford" of whom Mr. Hall wrote was Rev. Dougald Crawford who had come from Scotland, preached in this section a few years without identifying himself with any Presbytery, and returned to Scotland in 1790. We, therefore, learn that there had been a regularly established preaching appointment in the Laurel Hill community previous to 1790; but clearly Mr. Hall's language indicates that there was no organized church here in 1794 when he made his report to Synod.

The earliest mention of Laurel Hill by name as a preaching appointment occurs in the Minutes of the Presbytery of Orange (of which this section was a part until 1812) for September, 1796, where Presbytery "ordered that Messrs. Paisley and Gillespie supply one Sabbath at each of the following places: Raft Swamp, Shoe Heel, Laurel Hill, and Ashpole." This does not necessarily mean that Laurel Hill was then an organized church; it was prob-

ably only a gathering place for preaching. In the Minutes of Presbytery for the following March, 1797, we read this item: "A petition from Raft Swamp, Laurel Hill, Ashpole, and Lumber Bridge for Mr. John Gillespie's labors for one year. Ordered that he supply those places." And in Presbytery's minutes for October of the same year we read: "Calls were presented to Mr. John Gillespie from the Congregations of Center, Laurel Hill, and Raft Swamp, which he accepted." Now Laurel Hill had become an organized church, for only an organized church can call a pastor. Moreover, we are confirmed in the opinion that it was organized in 1797 by the following circumstance: In 1860 the Session of Laurel Hill Church ordered the pastor, Rev. James P. McPherson, to purchase a new Sessional Record book and to transcribe in it all the previous records of the Session. Mr. McPherson did this, and on the outside of the board cover of this book are etched these words: "Sessional Records of Laurel Hill Church, Richmond County, North Carolina, From 1797 to 1860." At the time Mr. McPherson wrote these words one member of his Session was Mr. John Buchanan, who was then 87 years old and was elected an elder in Laurel Hill Church on the day of its organization; Mr. McPherson, in stating that the church was organized in 1797, was, therefore, relying on first hand information.

Into the Sessional record book just referred to Mr. McPherson copied all the records from those books previously in use which he could find. The first Session meeting recorded was dated "August, 1815." Mr. McPherson was convinced that "there is or ought to be another book containing records previous to 1815," but he was never able to find it. The records from 1815 to 1850 were very incomplete, according to Mr. McPherson, some pages being torn out, the minutes themselves giving only a few facts, not recording the names of the ministers and elders present at the meetings of the Session, and occasionally omitting the names of those received into the church; nor were the minutes signed by the Clerk or Moderator. We have a fairly complete roll of baptisms from 1830 to the present time.

Rev. John Gillespie, who was called as the first pastor of the church in 1797, resigned in 1801. The following year the church called to its pastorate Rev. Malcolm McNair, a young man who had just been licensed to preach, and he was installed in June, 1803. Mr. McNair was born in Robeson County. He was the grandfather of Mr. Howard C. McNair, of Maxton. His mother had been Mrs. Katherine Buie McFarland before her marriage to Rev. Malcolm McNair's father. She was the mother of several children by her first marriage, one of whom was Hon. Duncan McFarland,

previously referred to in this sketch; so he and the second pastor of Laurel Hill were half brothers. Mr. McNair spent the whole of his ministerial life in this pastorate. In connection with Laurel Hill he also served Center, Ashpole, and Red Bluff. Red Bluff was then the name of the church that we know today as Smyrna; thus in Mr. McNair's pastorate there began that association of Laurel Hill and Smyrna which has continued, except for an interval of 31 years, down to the present day. Mr. McNair was greatly beloved by his people, his pastorate being terminated only by his death in 1822 at the comparatively early age of 46. He was buried in the McFarland cemetery within sight of the church, and the congregation erected a suitable monument at his grave.

For the next six years the church had no pastor, but was supplied for a brief period by each of the following ministers: Rev. Colin McIver, Rev. Robert Lynch, and Rev. John McIntyre. Mr. McIntyre was the great grandfather of Dr. W. G. Shaw, of Wagram; it is said he offered the dedicatory prayer of the first Montpelier church building when he was 102 years of age. He died a few months later.

While Laurel Hill has entertained the Presbytery of Fayetteville more than twelve times the first meeting of Presbytery held in the church was in August, 1828. At that meeting Presbytery ordained to the ministry Rev. Duncan McIntyre, recently come from Scotland, and also installed him pastor of Laurel Hill, Center, Ashpole, and Red Bluff (Smyrna) churches, the officers and members of all four congregations being present at the service. Mr. McIntyre remained only a little more than a year, the pastoral relationship being dissolved in December, 1829.

A few months after the departure of Mr. McIntyre Rev. Archibald McQueen became Stated Supply of the Laurel Hill group. It was during his first year that Hector McNeill, a member of Laurel Hill Church, was received under care of Presbytery as a candidate for the ministry. His home was north of the Lumber River beyond Wagram. So far as we know only two other members of Laurel Hill have entered the ministry—John R. McIntosh and Andrew McMillan.

During the early part of Mr. McQueen's pastorate Ashpole Church withdrew from the Laurel Hill group, and not long afterwards Mr. McQueen resigned the pastorate of Center Church, leaving Laurel Hill and Red Bluff under Mr. McQueen's care. His pastorate was a most fruitful one; the Sessional report to Presbytery in 1839 shows that there were 296 members on the roll of the church, some of these being slaves.

In November, 1841, Mr. McQueen's ministrations were terminated in a most unfortunate manner. It seems that he was married three times. His second wife was Miss Julia Ann McLeod, daughter of William McLeod, a ruling elder in this church who lived at Scotch Grove siding. About 1839 she died and a year or two later he was married to her sister, Miss Mary McLeod. At that time there was an article in the Confession of Faith forbidding a man to marry the sister of his deceased wife on the grounds that it was contrary to the Scriptures. Now when a Presbyterian minister is ordained to preach he declares publicly and solemnly that he accepts the Confession of Faith as being the teaching of God's Word and that he will govern his life accordingly. Mr. McQueen knew that his second marriage was in violation of his ordination vow, but sought to justify himself on the ground that the Confession of Faith was in error in stating that the Bible forbade such a marriage. Nevertheless, the Presbytery suspended him from the ministry and all the sealing ordinances of the church, and sent a minister to Laurel Hill to declare the pulpit vacant.

This was a tragedy! For while Presbytery was in duty bound to administer some discipline to one who had knowingly violated his ordination vows, we cannot think that it was justified in the drastic action it took; some milder form of discipline would have answered the purpose. For Mr. McQueen's personal character was above reproach, his labors had been abundantly blessed, and he was greatly beloved by all who knew him and to whom he ministered. The action of Presbytery all but shattered his usefulness to the church. The case was appealed to the General Assembly which sustained the Presbytery. Petitions for his restoration were signed by hundreds of people from this section of the State, and sent to Presbytery. Finally, in 1846, after five years of suspension, he was reinstated. But the fight against him had been bitter and uncompromising, and was so humiliating to him that the strain told heavily upon him, and he survived only a short time, and died at Floral College in 1851. Thus the usefulness of a good man was brought to an untimely end.

In the meantime the Session of Laurel Hill Church, by direction of Presbytery, had suspended Mrs. McQueen indefinitely from the communion of the church for the same offense. Many years afterwards the General Assembly concluded that the Scriptural teaching on this subject was too vague to warrant the assertion that it was sinful for one to marry his deceased wife's sister, and expunged that article from the Confession of Faith.

Mr. McQueen was a man of superior intellect. Educated at the University of North Carolina, he practiced law for a short

time. Later he took up the study of medicine and followed that profession for a time. Afterwards, feeling called to the ministry, he attended Columbia Theological Seminary and was ordained to preach by the Presbytery of Fayetteville in 1829. He lies buried in Stewartsville Cemetery by the side of his first wife. His second and third wives are buried in the McFarland Cemetery near the church, their memorial stones having been displaced by Sherman's soldiers in 1865.

After the dissolution of Mr. McQueen's pastoral relation in 1841 the grouping of Laurel Hill with Smyrna was discontinued until 1873. In 1842 Rev. Archibald Baker became pastor of the church, and so continued for about five years when he removed to Salisbury. One of our honored deacons today is his namesake—Archibald Baker Alford.

From then until 1856 the church had no installed pastor but was supplied by various ministers, among whom were Rev. Andrew McMillan and Rev. John R. McIntosh, both of whom were born and reared within the bounds of the congregation, the former being the father of one of our present members, Mrs. Maggie Monroe, and the latter being an uncle to another of our members, Miss Carrie McIntosh.

Until the year 1852 Laurel Hill drew on a wide territory for its membership. Bethel was the nearest church on the north, Center the nearest on the east, Smyrna on the south, and we know not how far it was to the nearest church on the west. But in 1852 Montpelier Church was organized just beyond Gilchrist Bridge. This was but the first of a number of churches that were in the course of time organized within, or near by, the bounds of this congregation, and which was to result in a drastic limitation of the growth of the mother church. In this connection it is well to mention that Laurel Hill and Montpelier were grouped together during the entire eleven years of Rev. J. P. McPherson's pastorate, and later on from 1883 to 1890 when Mr. Ferguson was pastor.

In 1856 Rev. James P. McPherson was invited to minister to the congregation and subsequently was installed pastor. He was the grandfather of Mrs. Alma Lee Alford, one of our members at the present time. He occupied the old McFarland home just across the road from the church until a few weeks before Sherman's army encamped at Laurel Hill. Some of the soldiers set fire to the house and destroyed it. After that Mr. McPherson lived at what is known as the McPherson Place, about three miles southeast of the church. During Mr. McPherson's pastorate another church was organized within the bounds of Laurel Hill congregation just

five miles away—the church at Laurinburg. The organization of this church was accomplished only after much opposition on the part of Laurel Hill, accompanied by much bitterness of feeling. Various reasons were assigned by Laurel Hill for opposing the organization of the Laurinburg Church. But probably the one reason that lay back of it all was that among those who wished to leave the mother church to form the new organization were some of the wealthiest, most substantial and influential members of Laurel Hill, and their going, it was felt would be an irreparable loss to the mother church. Then, too, Laurinburg was at that time a straggling village of not over a half dozen homes, one or two stores, and a school house, and it was impossible for the Laurel Hill people to see that it would ever become the populous and flourishing city that it now is. However, despite the opposition, the church was organized in March, 1859. During the years that have intervened since then there has been a steady stream of our members flowing into the Laurinburg church enriching her life and service at a tremendous cost to the old mother church. But not one of us today regrets that this splendid church was established. Indeed we regard with gratitude and pardonable pride her marvelous growth and ever increasing usefulness in the kingdom of God.

Mr. McPherson's pastorate continued through the dark days of the Civil War. There is very little in the minutes of the Session to indicate that a war was in progress. Mark's Creek Church was organized in 1862 and several of our members were dismissed to become its charter members. The church's membership increased during the war; in 1864 there were 275 members, 80 of whom were slaves. Never since that year has the church reported that many on its roll. It is well to remind ourselves that until after the Civil War it was customary for the slaves to worship in the churches of their owners. That explains the galleries that are to be found in all the church buildings that were erected previous to the War between the States. We are told that on preaching Sundays the galleries of this church were packed with colored people. Over and over again do we find in our Sessional record book such entries as this: "September 4, 1864. The following colored persons, having been previously instructed by the pastor, applied for admission into the church, viz: Rhemus, Zack, Jim, and Isaiah, belonging to Dr. A. Patterson; Henry, belonging to John McNeill; Billy, to Miss Peggy McNair; and Gracey, belonging to James Patterson, Sr. They were examined as to their knowledge and practical acquaintance with religion, and received as members of the church." Sherman's army on its northward march camped at

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the church in March, 1865, and when the army moved on large numbers of slaves went with the soldiers, including some who were members of Laurel Hill Church; consequently, just before the Fall communion that year the Session took this action: "Several of the colored members of this church having left their owners and gone off with Sherman's army in March last, it was determined after mature deliberation, that none such should commune on tomorrow, except those who are able to give a satisfactory account of their conduct in this matter."

When the slaves were set free in 1865 they owned no property and, therefore, could not build churches for themselves; so they continued to worship in the churches of the white people for a number of years. But gradually as their material condition improved they began to organize and build churches of their own. Three such churches were established within the bounds of Laurel Hill about 1875 or 1880. There was Chapel Hill Presbyterian Church, about a mile southwest of Laurel Hill; Cool Spring Methodist Church about three miles north; and Silver Hill Presbyterian Church about six miles northwest. Without any doubt nearly all those constituting the charter membership of these churches had been members of Laurel Hill. To such an extent did our colored members discontinue attendance upon the services at Laurel Hill and join these other churches without going through the formality of securing letters of dismission that in 1879 the Session passed a resolution to this effect: "That all the colored members who desire to remain in connection with this church should make it known to the Session and that the names of those not so desiring should be dropped from the roll of church members;" whereupon 24 colored people came before the Session requesting their names be continued on the Laurel Hill roll. Lydia McMillan was the name of the last colored person to join our church, she being received in 1882. Thus three more churches were organized with Laurel Hill members.

After a service of eleven years in this pastorate Mr. McPherson resigned in 1867, and took charge for awhile of McPherson Church near Fayetteville. He spent his declining years in Harnett County where he died and lies buried. He was a very useful man both in the Presbytery and in his pastorates. He served as Stated Clerk of the Presbytery of Fayetteville for many years; to him do we owe the preservation of the records of our church from 1815 to 1860; and during his pastorate 121 persons were added to the roll of Laurel Hill Church.

After Mr. McPherson retired from the pastorate Rev. N. T. Bowden, pastor of the Laurinburg Church, served Laurel Hill most

acceptably for a year or two. It was in 1868, during Mr. Bowden's brief ministry that Miss Betty Currie united with our church. She has been a member longer than any other person on our roll today. A little later in the same month—September, 1868—Mrs. Emily Breeden and Miss Ann Mariah McIntosh joined Laurel Hill, but for some years they have been members of other churches. Rev. Andrew McMillan succeeded Mr. Bowden as Stated Supply for one year. His labors were signally blessed in that fifteen persons united with the church that year on examination.

In June, 1871, began the ministry of one whose pastorate was to be the longest in the history of the church—Rev. A. N. Ferguson. Presbytery's minutes for that year show that he was granted permission to supply Laurel Hill Church for one-half of his time at a salary of \$400 a year, Lumberton for one-fourth of his time at a salary of \$200, and Euphronia, in Chatham County, for one-fourth of his time at a salary of \$200. This arrangement continued only about eighteen months, however; for on January 1, 1873, Presbytery gave Mr. Ferguson permission to supply Smyrna Church at a salary of \$400, and the grouping with Lumberton and Euphronia was terminated. Once more after 31 years of separation Laurel Hill and Smyrna were associated together under the same pastor and this happy arrangement has continued to the present without interruption.

An outstanding event in the early years of Mr. Ferguson's pastorate was the discontinuance of the old Scotch Fair that had been held once a year for a long time within sight of the church to the west. At the beginning it was a great aid to the people who could meet there from widely scattered sections and exchange goods one with another. But after a time the forces of evil gained the ascendancy and the Fair became an occasion for gambling, horse-racing, and drunken carousals with all their attending evils. Mr. Ferguson had the courage to get a petition signed by the law-abiding people of the community that the State legislature would order its discontinuance. The legislature so ordered, and the chief credit must go to Mr. Ferguson.

The communicants of this church in 1872 numbered 182. In March, 1893, this number had increased to 206, and there were 109 teachers and pupils in the Sunday School. Two events transpired within the next eighteen months that will explain the beginning of a decline in our membership which continued for more than twenty years, namely the organization of the Ida Mills Church (now the Church in the Pines), which took place in 1893, and the organization of Aberdeen Church the following year. Practically all the charter members of both these churches joined them by cer-

tificate from Laurel Hill Church. Thus our church was being even more closely surrounded with new church organizations, resulting not only in the loss of members from our own roll, but also blocking our future growth in those directions. Surely Laurel Hill may be called "The mother of churches!" In June of this year Aberdeen Church was dissolved, but only six of those who went out from us returned, the others joining churches elsewhere. In view of these new organizations we are not surprised that ten years later, in 1903, the church's membership had dwindled to 117 and the Sunday School to 63 pupils and teachers—a decrease of 89 church members and 46 Sunday School pupils.

Of special interest is this entry on the Sessional records: "On June 13th and 14th, 1896, extra services were held in connection with the 25th anniversary of our minister's service to this church. It was an occasion most refreshing and enjoyable, with large congregations in attendance. On Saturday interesting addresses were made by Rev. J. W. Johnston to the pastor, Rev. D. W. Fox to the congregation, and Mr. Charles F. Rankin on music. On Sabbath Rev. D. W. Fox preached at 11:00 A. M., and was followed by the pastor with a condensed review of the work done and events that have transpired during the 25 years of his ministry to the church." During this period there were 347 persons added to the membership of this church and 149 infants were baptized. When Mr. Ferguson took up the work in 1871 there were 169 members on the roll; when he laid it down 35 years later there were 129, showing how heavily the church had lost through deaths and dismissals in the meantime.

While many persons joined the church during Mr. Ferguson's ministry there were only two occasions at which any large number came in at the same time. One of these was in July, 1889, when following a series of meetings in which Rev. K. A. McLeod did the preaching, 27 were added to the church. It may be interesting to know the names of these; we give them just as they were recorded on the Session book at that time: Evalena Gibson, Lula Ferguson, Effie McNeill, Katie Sellars McNeill, Flora Lytch, Bessie Stewart, Elidia McLean, Eliza Ferguson, Jennie Russell, R. N. Monroe, Alexander Shaw, William Currie, D. Thomas Currie, Angus Lytch, James Lytch, Walter Lee, Charlie Lee, Willie McNair, James L. McNair, Willie Malloy, John Davis, James McLaurin, Murdock Johnson, D. McD. Withers, G. Winston McNeill, E. Fairley Murray, Hugh McDonald and Z. V. Pate.

But cold facts and figures can never portray the sacrifices Mr. Ferguson made nor the blessings he was instrumental in bringing to the churches he served in this and surrounding counties: counsel

to the perplexed, comfort to sorrowing and anxious hearts, and the example of a godly life that was consistent with the Gospel he preached. On July 26, 1906, he passed quietly into the "rest that remaineth for the people of God," the final resting place of his body being in the cemetery at Laurinburg.

When Mr. Ferguson began his work at Laurel Hill the following were the ruling elders in the church: Daniel C. Stewart, Dr. Archibald Patterson, Milton McIntosh, John McKay, Murdock Morrison, and John McNeill. When he died not one of these was alive, they having been succeeded by D. Z. Harden, H. McN. Lytch, Lauchlin McNeill, and A. F. Patterson. Today, only 25 years later, not one of these last named brethren remains! How quickly one generation of workers succeeds another! How brief our span of life!

"Make haste, O man, to live,
For thou so soon must die;
Time hurries past thee like the breeze;
How swift its moments fly!"

Mr. Ferguson was succeeded by Rev. J. H. Dixon, who came from Atlanta Presbytery and began his duties among us in January, 1907. In 1912 Milton Presbyterian Church was organized eight miles to the southeast of us, most of the charter members being dismissed from Laurel Hill to form the organization. This church was dissolved in 1924, and some of those who had gone out from us returned. During Mr. Dixon's pastorate the congregation developed remarkably in the grace of giving. The report to Presbytery in his first year showed an aggregate of gifts of \$1140; five years later the amount reported was \$3,253—trebling the former figures. The pastoral relation between Mr. Dixon and the congregation was dissolved in 1916, that he might accept a call to a church in Charlotte, where his death took place a few years later.

Shortly after the departure of Mr. Dixon Rev. F. O. Hellier, Ph. D., came from Texas as Stated Supply of Laurel Hill, his name first appearing on the minutes of the Session in May, 1917. A year later he was installed pastor by a Commission of the Presbytery, and immediately afterwards, obtaining a leave of absence from the congregation, he entered Y. M. C. A. work among the American troops, being in France part of the time. He returned in the Fall of 1919, but remained only a few months when he accepted a call to a church in Bessemer, Ala., of which church he was pastor at the time of his death a few years later. Dr. Hellier was possessed of unusual gifts as a pulpit orator, and the people

of this congregation were greatly disappointed when he left them so shortly after his return from abroad.

During the little more than a year that Dr. Hellier was in Y. M. C. A. work Rev. Dougald McIntyre, D. D., substituted for him in ministering to his congregation. Dr. McIntyre was a native of Scotland, but came to Canada in his youth, and it was from there that he came to serve Laurel Hill Church. Scotchman as he was, he at once felt at home among the descendants of the Highland Scots who compose most of this congregation. During his brief stay he greatly endeared himself to the people. Endowed with a warm, sympathetic nature, and consecrated unreservedly to his Master's service, he drew the people to him as soon as he came and accomplished much in the work of the kingdom in this community. It was with sincere sorrow that the congregation gave him up in the early Fall of 1919, when he accepted the pastorate of the Blenheim group of churches in South Carolina. At the present he is ministering to a congregation in New Market, Ontario, Canada.

It was while Dr. McIntyre was supplying the church that a movement was started for the erection of a manse. Until the close of Mr. Dixon's pastorate the minister had always lived in a house of his own. But with changing conditions it became evident that henceforth the church must either rent a house for its pastor or build a manse of its own. The congregation decided on the latter plan, and by 1920 had completed a very commodious edifice including all modern appointments.

The first minister to occupy this manse was Rev. Frank L. Johnston, D. D., who came from Missouri as Stated Supply in the Spring of 1920. In Dr. Johnston Laurel Hill had an unusually able and versatile minister. Of extraordinary intellectual ability, he had cultivated his mind by study and by extensive travels both in America and in Europe; better still he had had a rich experience of God's grace. His heart went out in love and sympathy and helpful service to all men, but especially to the poor and illiterate. He was greatly interested in sociological enterprises and was instrumental in organizing a woman's civic club in the community which the members have very appropriately named "The Frank L. Johnston Club." It is a wide awake organization and has proved of great benefit to those who have identified themselves with it. A few years ago the club erected a building suitable to their activities on the church grounds, granting the church permission to use it, and the church has availed itself of this privilege in no small measure. But Dr. Johnston's service to the church and community was cut short. Possessed of indomitable zeal and

energy he wore himself out in the Master's work. His heart, unable to stand the strain, gave way, and he departed to his heavenly home in June, 1921, a great throng followed him to his grave in the cemetery at Laurinburg. His congregations soon afterwards erected a suitable monument at the head of his grave. Though his service to the church was brief—only a little more than a year—he left a marked impression on the people to whom he ministered. Truly it may be said of him that “he being dead yet speaketh.”

For a year after Dr. Johnston's death the pulpit was vacant. At the end of that time the congregation, by unanimous vote, called to its pastorate Rev. G. F. Kirkpatrick, at that time pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Lillington, N. C., but a native of Westminster, S. C. Accepting the call, he entered upon the duties of this pastorate July 1, 1922, and is pastor of the church at the present time. In the Summer of 1928 Laurel Hill gave up its two Sunday night preaching appointments in order to enable the Gibson Presbyterian Church to have part of its pastor's time. Laurel Hill was glad to have this small but faithful band of Christians associated with it, and the arrangement has worked most harmoniously. During the present pastorate 93 persons have been added to the church, while we have lost 54 by death or dismissal to other churches. Our resident membership at present numbers 124.

According to tradition the first house of worship on this spot was a log building. As to when the second church edifice was erected we do not know; but it was still standing and in a good state of preservation when the present house of worship was built. It stood just a few feet north of this building, and we are informed that there was no means whatever provided for heating it. The old building stood for some years after the present house of worship was completed; then it was divided in the middle and one-half moved to the southeast corner of the church grounds and converted into a school building. Quite a number of persons living today attended school in it. It was finally destroyed by fire.

The building in which we worship today was begun in 1855 and completed in 1856 at a cost of \$2700. Mr. Edwin Buchanan, of Laurinburg, was the first person to be baptized in it, he having been baptized as an infant in February, 1856. This house of worship, after being in use for 75 years is in an excellent state of preservation, and, together with the Community Hut, is entirely adequate to our needs.

Originally there was a porch on the front end of this building, large round columns, painted gray, supporting a flat roof, and adding a touch of dignity to the whole structure. This porch was

removed sometime in the eighties. About that same time a partition was put across the end of the auditorium forming a vestibule. It is said by one aged person that until just after the Civil War the Session room was in the cupola. When Sherman's raiders camped at the church in 1865 they mutilated the walls of the church and it was not until 1880 that the congregation was able to repair them. Before the army camped here the Bible had rested on a beautiful scarlet cushion from which golden tassels hung on three sides. The soldiers cut off these tassels and used them to decorate the bridles of their horses. For many years the choir sat in the gallery facing the pulpit, but after the Civil War it occupied, until comparatively recent years, several pews in the center of the church nearest the pulpit. When the church was first built the pulpit was next to the wall on the platform now occupied by the choir, but a few years ago a lower platform was built for a pulpit just in front of the older one, which is the present arrangement. During slavery days and for a number of years afterwards the colored people occupied the south gallery of the church. In case of a large crowd they would also sit in the north gallery. To give them ready access to the south gallery there was a flight of stairs leading down from it to an outside door that opened where the window of the Session room now is. During Mr. Dixon's pastorate these steps were removed. The first organ was placed in the church in 1882. Before that a song leader, who was called a precentor, led the singing, getting the correct pitch by means of a tuning fork, and singing altogether by shaped notes. Mr. John D. Currie, father of Miss Bettie Currie and her sisters, was the precentor for many years. We are told that the congregational singing was far better then than now, in that a larger proportion of the people entered into this feature of the worship and had a more accurate knowledge of singing by note than is the case today.

On account of the incomplete records of the Session during the early years we are not certain that we have the names of all the ruling elders and deacons of the church for the first 45 years of its history. Mr. Ferguson, in his sketch of the church written in 1879, says that the original elders were two John McNairs—"Hatter" John and "Red" John—and John Buchanan. The latter was the grandfather of Edwin Buchanan. He came from Scotland in 1770 at the age of six, this making him 27 years old when the church was organized. He died in 1866 at the ripe age of 96. In addition to these the following persons were brought into the eldership whose dates of service we cannot ascertain: Gilbert Gilchrist, John McMillan, Duncan Stalker, William McLeod, Robert

Campbell, George McIntosh, and John McKinnon. Other elders who have served this church, together with the dates of their official relationship, are as follows:

Murdock McKinnon	1831-1860	L. B. Prince	1879-1891
Daniel C. Stewart	1840-1893		also 1897-1899
John C. Baker	1848-1854	Lauchlin McNeill	1883-1912
John McNeill	1848-1879	Hector McLean	1883-1893
Milton McIntosh	1848-1883	A. F. Patterson	1883-1922
Dr. Archibald Patterson,		Henry Fairley	1891-1901
1859-1872		D. Z. Harden	1891-1912
John McKay	1859-1882	H. C. McMillan	1911-1916
Murdock Morrison	1859-1904	A. J. Currie	1918-1919
John F. McNair	1877-1904	Charles L. Clark	1924-1929
H. McN. Lytch	1877-1921		

Would that it were possible for us to go into the lives of each of these servants of God in detail. There is so much that could be said that would be inspirational to us. Some of them were spiritual giants and all contributed a part in making Laurel Hill Church the tower of spiritual strength which it has ever been in the community. The Session today is composed of the following: E. L. McNair, elected in 1911; Clarence Lytch, the Clerk of the Session, who was elected in 1915; H. F. Monroe, elected in 1920; E. F. Murray, elected in 1924; A. J. Currie, elected in 1930; and Hugh McDonald, elected this Summer (1931). It is a pleasure to testify that during the nine years of the present pastorate entire harmony has prevailed in all the deliberations of the Session, and the elders have been loyal to the teaching and practice of the church.

The first election of deacons seems to have taken place in 1859. Those elected at that time, together with others that have served since, are as follows:

Matthew W. McNair.....	1859-1873	J. A. McNeill	1893-1894
John H. McLean	1859-1877	J. Malloy McLean	1893-1915
William Buchanan	1859-1888	Hector C. McMillan	1895-1911
John D. Currie	1859-1889	E. F. Murray	1900-1901
H. McN. Lytch	1872-1877	Angus F. Lytch	1907-1919
Angus Stewart	1872-1880	George McIntosh	1911-1912
A. F. Patterson	1877-1883	R. E. Warwick	1911-1918
John B. McNeill	1877-	R. A. Monroe	1911-1921
D. Z. Harden	1883-1891	A. J. Currie	1915-1918
A. A. Malloy	1883-1893	H. F. Monroe	1918-1920
Edwin Buchanan	1891-1901	John D. McLean	1920-1930

At present the board of deacons consists of the following: J. A. McMillan, who was elected in 1915, and who, for some years, has served faithfully as Treasurer of Current Expenses; Albert Lytch, elected in 1918; Raymond Monroe, elected in 1920; Donald Stubbs,

elected in 1924; A. B. Alford, elected in 1924, and recently appointed Treasurer of Benevolences; and R. L. McGugan, elected this Summer (1931).

The Session did not begin copying its annual report to Presbytery in its minute book until 1872, and as no other records of the Sunday School have been preserved we do not know just when the first Sunday School was established in this church. But from the minutes of Presbytery we learn that in 1857 Laurel Hill had a Sunday School with 35 pupils and teachers enrolled; in 1861 the number on the roll had dropped to 25. From then on for some years the minutes of the Presbytery do not indicate that there was any Sunday School; but in the Sessional report for 1872 appears this statement: "Those heads of families who have children bring them to Sunday School when we have Sunday School," indicating that Sunday School was conducted occasionally. Beginning with 1879, however, the Session reports each year that it maintains a Sunday School, the number on roll that year being 30. Since 1885 the average enrollment has been about 80, the number this year being 100. The records do not reveal the names of the Superintendents, but we are informed that the following have acted in that capacity: Milton McIntosh, Lauchlin McNeill, L. B. Prince, H. McN. Lytch, H. C. McMillan, and A. F. Patterson. This year Donald Stubbs is rendering excellent service as Superintendent, with Duncan Currie and Hunter Murray as Secretaries. The present teachers are: Miss Martha Murray, Mrs. Louise Stewart, Mrs. A. B. Alford, Miss Sarah Currie, Mrs. E. F. Murray, Mrs. D. H. Shaw, Raymond Monroe, Mrs. Maggie Monroe, and E. F. Murray. These men and women have proven themselves both capable and faithful in the sacred task that devolves upon them. Practically none of their pupils reaches the age of accountability without confessing Christ as their Saviour and uniting with the church.

In the report of the Session for the year ending April, 1892, mention is made for the first time of a "Gentlemen's and Boys' Missionary Society." That year it contributed \$57 to Foreign Missions. Two years later the name is changed to "The Gentlemen's Missionary Society." It functioned with rather indifferent success until 1923 when it was disbanded. All its contributions were devoted to the cause of Foreign Missions.

The first society for young people was called "The Children's Society," and the first mention made of it in the Sessional records was in 1894 when it contributed \$13 to Foreign Missions. This society continued to function under that name and to give its offerings to Foreign Missions until during the pastorate of Dr.

Hellier, when a Christian Endeavor Society was organized and the Children's Society was merged with that. In 1922 a Junior Christian Endeavor Society was organized and continues to do good work under the leadership of Miss Annie Currie. The primary object of these Christian Endeavor Societies has been to train the young people for leadership in Christian activities. Emphasis has not been placed on giving of money, but such funds as have been contributed have been distributed among the various benevolent causes.

The origin of organized work among the women of Laurel Hill is not certain. We know that such work was established as early as 1884; for in April of the following year the Session's report stated that "The Ladies' Mission Society" had contributed \$54 to Foreign Missions; for many years their contributions went altogether to this cause. We have been told, however, that for some years there was also a Home Mission Society among the women of the church, but of this we can find no authentic record. In 1889 there was organized in Fayetteville the "Missionary Union," the object of which was to unite all the ladies' Societies of Fayetteville Presbytery into a band for mutual helpfulness and inspiration. The Ladies' Mission Society of Laurel Hill sent Mrs. Ella McPherson Lee to this initial meeting in Fayetteville, thereby making our Society a charter member of the organization that later became "The Fayetteville Presbyterial." The records of the Ladies' Mission Society of our church have very unfortunately been lost so that we cannot give the names of the charter members and officers. The name of the Society was changed about fifteen years ago to "The Woman's Auxiliary," and about the same time they began to divide their offerings among all the Assembly's benevolent causes. In 1928 the Auxiliary adopted the Circle plan, and today it has three circles, two prayer bands, one Home and one Foreign Mission study class each year, and engages in systematic Bible study. The membership includes all the adult women who belong to the church and the average attendance is about 25. The President this year is Mrs. D. H. Shaw, who is also President of Fayetteville Presbyterial; the Vice-President is Mrs. N. W. Gillis, and Mrs. A. B. Alford is the Secretary-Treasurer. This society has for several years been one of the most interesting and inspiring phases of our church life.

Laurel Hill has ever been composed of liberal-hearted people, giving generously of their means to all the objects of benevolence recommended by the General Assembly, and also supporting their minister in a manner suited to his needs, as well as manifesting their loyalty to him in countless other ways. In intelligence, true

culture, and spirituality this people will compare favorably with those of any church.

There is much more that we could say about this venerable church, but we must forbear. Laurel Hill Church has a great past. The social and religious blessings we enjoy today we owe to those godly men and women who toiled and sacrificed here through the years that are gone and who do now rest from their labors. Generation after generation has worshipped on this spot, each contributing its part toward the spiritual well-being of its successor. We today are the cumulative result of all the generations of the past. The ground whereon we stand is holy ground made sacred by the feet of Christian men and women who have trod this soil through the years. To us our fathers have passed the responsibility of perpetuating and perfecting the work they laid down. Their mantle has fallen upon our shoulders; God grant that we may wear it worthily so that at some distant day when we, too, have joined the generations of the past, others may gather here and praise God that we have lived.

SMYRNA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In a brief historical sketch of Smyrna Church written in 1878, Rev. A. N. Ferguson began with these words: "Smyrna Church (in the Presbytery of Fayetteville) is located in the southeastern corner of Richmond County about one mile from the South Carolina state line, and about the same distance from the Robeson County line, and is directly on what is known as the Stewartsville Road." That description is correct today if we substitute "Scotland" for "Richmond" County. But Smyrna Church has not always stood on its present site, nor has its name always been "Smyrna." Once its name was "Red Bluff," and at that time it was located on a high bluff on the west bank of the Little Pedee River, in Marlboro County, S. C., about six miles southwest of the present location.

Until about 1840 that part of South Carolina lying east of the Great Pedee River was included within the bounds of Fayetteville Presbytery, and until 1812 all of Fayetteville Presbytery was within the bounds of Orange Presbytery. The records of neither Presbytery have anything to say about the organization of Red Bluff Church. This may be accounted for by the fact that in those days it was not at all uncommon for a body of Presbyterians to organize themselves into a church and function for several years before coming under the oversight of a Presbytery. The Sessional records of Red Bluff have altogether perished. So we can derive no information whatever from that source as to the origin of the church. However, Rev. George Howe, D. D., in his "History of the Presbyterian Church in South Carolina," Vol. II, says this: "The site of the old Red Bluff Church is still to be seen in Marlboro County, on the west bank of the Little Pedee River, on a high bluff from which it takes its name. It was perhaps the oldest church in the state (of South Carolina) on the east of the Great Pedee. We have failed to get the exact date of its organization. It was doubtless organized some years previous to the great revival of 1802, by Scotch settlers, who came down into that region from the Cape Fear settlement. At that time (1802) Rev. Colin Lindsay was preaching there to a regularly organized church, and, as far as we can learn, a church of some considerable strength."

Rev. Colin Lindsay was born in Scotland in 1744. The following interesting story in regard to his mother has been current in this section ever since Mr. Lindsay began his work in this part of North and South Carolina: Several years before his birth the

woman who was later to become his mother became very ill. Falling into a prolonged state of unconsciousness, and giving every appearance of being dead, she was buried late in the afternoon in the family burying ground hard by her home. Just after dark grave robbers disinterred her body in order to secure a very valuable ring. Having some difficulty in removing the ring on account of its being somewhat imbedded in the flesh, one of the thieves undertook to cut off the finger. As soon as he cut into the flesh the blood started flowing and consciousness returned. She moved and attempted to sit up, whereupon the robbers fled in terror. Mrs. Lindsay managed to crawl to her home nearby and frightened her husband terribly as she appeared in the door clad in her cerebral garments. She was soon nursed back to health, however, and six years later a babe was born whom the parents named Colin, and who afterwards entered the ministry. This story is as well authenticated as any tradition can be, and its truthfulness is not questioned among the Scotch of this section.

In 1790, at the age of 46, Mr. Lindsay migrated to North Carolina and identified himself with the Presbytery of Fayetteville. But because of his "too free use of ardent spirits" and other indiscretions, including a violent temper that frequently issued in abusive language, he was suspended from the ministry. Professing repentance he was restored; later he was suspended again, and again he repented and was restored. The third time he was deposed (about 1801) he remained under suspension till the day of his death. However, he continued to preach independently of the Presbytery, and it was in this capacity that he was ministering to Red Bluff Church at the time of the Great Revival of 1802.

This Revival was South-wide in its extent, and everywhere it was attended by considerable excitement and violent bodily contortions. During the meetings even the staid old Scotch would often lose control of themselves and begin trembling and jerking and shouting and rolling on the floor or ground. Many sincere Christian people—ministers and laymen—differed very decidedly in their opinions as to the true merits of the Revival. And while some of those professing to be converted under such circumstances proved later to have been merely victims of emotional excitement, it has been well attested that thousands of people were genuinely converted and became useful Christian workers. At Red Bluff as elsewhere a good degree of excitement, and, perhaps, some excesses attended the revival meetings. Mr. Lindsay, it is said, at first tolerated, then afterwards took strong grounds against the revivalists. He tried to restrain the manifestations of the deep emotion of the revivalists, and would preface his sermons with

the request that "the devil's children would remain quiet while God's children hear his Word."

A goodly number of the Red Bluff congregation sided with Mr. Lindsay in the matter of the revival. This caused two factions in the church, very bitter in their feelings toward each other. The revivalists did not at first secede from the church, but invited Rev. Murdock Murphy, of Robeson County, who sympathized with their views, to preach for them on a different day from Mr. Lindsay's appointment. A well established tradition is to the effect that the anti-revivalists, to defeat this movement, built a high rail fence around the church on the night previous to the first appointment of Mr. Murphy. The next day when the minister and his small congregation arrived at the church, the elder who kept the key (Mr. John McRay), being in sympathy with the revivalists, leaped over the fence, opened the church door, and bade the minister and congregation to follow, which they did, and worshipped without further molestation. After this Mr. Murphy preached at private houses until a new house of worship was erected by the Revivalists about one and one-half miles east of the old church. This was probably about where the Berea Croatan school now stands. The new church was called "Sharon," and continued a number of years a separate organization. Mr. Lindsay died in 1817 at the age of 73, and was buried in Stewartsville Cemetery. His death took place in the home in which he had been living for many years near Bethel Church, of which he had formerly been pastor. After his death the two factions came together again at the old site. Had Mr. Lindsay been a more pious and prudent man this breach in the church might have been prevented.

We have learned the name of but one elder during Mr. Lindsay's time—Mr. John McRay, whose name we have already mentioned, and who withdrew with the revivalists. The elders in Sharon were: John McRay, Hugh McLaurin, Duncan Rankin, Daniel McIntyre, and Archibald Thompson. After the reunion of the two factions the following elders were elected: Daniel McLaurin, John McRae, and Daniel McLeod. The latter lived at what we now know as the Fields Place and was dismissed by certificate from Smyrna to Carolina Church in 1863. Mr. Murphy supplied the reunited church for a short time when he removed to Georgia and later to Alabam. There he baptized in infancy the grandfather of the writer of this sketch.

The next minister after Mr. Murphy was Rev. Malcolm McNair. Just when Mr. McNair became pastor of Red Bluff we have not been able to ascertain. The first time "Red Bluff" appears in the minutes of Presbytery was in 1820, when it was placed opposite

Mr. McNair's name. Mr. McNair died in 1822 and is buried within sight of Laurel Hill Church. On the monument at the head of his grave it is recorded that he was "Pastor of Center, Laurel Hill, Ashpole, and Red Bluff."

For six years after Mr. McNair's death Smyrna had no regular minister. Then in 1828 Rev. Duncan McIntyre was installed pastor. He remained only a little more than a year when he resigned and was succeeded by Rev. Archibald McQueen, Sr.

Mr. McQueen was born and reared within the bounds of Red Bluff congregation, and was a ruling elder therein until he was licensed to preach the gospel. He was born in 1791, graduated from the University of North Carolina in 1812, and entered upon the practice of law in his home community. Noting the scarcity of physicians about him he laid aside the practice of law, studied medicine, and came back to practice that profession among his neighbors. Afterwards he heard the call of God to the ministry, entered Columbia Theological Seminary, and was ordained to the ministry in 1829, becoming pastor of Red Bluff Church the following year. We understand that during his pastorate his home was near Little Rock, S. C. Clearly Mr. McQueen was far above the average intellectually and a very versatile man. Better still he was deeply consecrated to his Lord and Master; he was devoted to the people whom he served and was in turn greatly beloved by them.

The first church building in which the Red Bluff congregation worshipped stood on the ground now occupied by the old factory. When it was erected we cannot ascertain, but we do know that it stood there as far back as 1817, and probably was built some years previous to that date. The Minutes of Fayetteville Presbytery for April 1837 contain this significant item: "It having been stated to Presbytery that a portion of Red Bluff congregation had it in contemplation to erect another house of worship, the erection of which was likely to divide and injure the church, a Committee was appointed to make inquiry." There is no record that the Committee ever reported back to any later meeting of Presbytery. Evidently there was a division in the Red Bluff congregation. All the Presbyterians living east of the Little Pedee as far as Laurinburg, Maxton, and Midway (there were no such places then) were members of Red Bluff. These constituted by far the large majority of the membership. Naturally they desired to have a house of worship more centrally located. The minority on the west side of the river opposed this. According to Dr. Howe the controversy resulted thus: In 1838 "the Red Bluff people moved their place of worship over into North Carolina,

about five miles east of the old site, built a new house of worship and changed the name to Smyrna." For many years the people of the Smyrna community have thought that Smyrna Church was organized in 1838. This mistaken impression arose from the fact that in 1838 the location of the place of worship was transferred from the banks of the Little Pedee to the banks of Leith Creek and the name changed from "Red Bluff" to "Smyrna." But in this move the organization remained intact. Nineteen years later, in 1857, the Presbyterians living west of the Little Pedee were organized into a church, which, because of loving memory of the old church that had been moved, they named "Red Bluff". This later "Red Bluff" Church was afterwards moved to McColl, S. C., and its name changed to "McColl Presbyterian Church." On the first page of the Sessional records of the more recent Red Bluff Church are these words: "In the early settlement of the country Red Bluff Presbyterian Church was founded by Scotch immigrants in Marlborough District, S. C., near the margin of the Little Pedee River. This continued a large and flourishing church till about 1835, when a new house of worship was erected in Richmond (now Scotland) County, N. C. The organization was moved and the name changed to Smyrna." Rev. J. A. Cousar, afterwards pastor of the later Red Bluff Church, and Rev. J. A. W. Thomas, in his "History of Marlboro County" bear record to the same effect. Smyrna Church, then, dates its origin not from 1836, as indicated on the marble tablet imbedded in the front wall of the church, but from the beginning of the original Red Bluff Church which was organized before 1802.

Rev. Archibald McQueen continued to be pastor of the church at the new location. In the Fall of 1839 there was a remarkable revival in the church. The interest lasted through two or three months. At one time there were daily services held at the church for two weeks or more. During this time 95 persons were added to the church.

Mr. McQueen was married three times. His first wife was a daughter of Col. James Stewart; his second was Miss Julia McLeod, daughter of William McLeod, a ruling elder in Laurel Hill Church; after her death he married her sister, Miss Mary McLeod. In those days there was a clause in the Confession of Faith forbidding a man's marrying his deceased wife's sister. This third marriage, therefore, was a violation of the Confession of Faith which his ordination vows solemnly bound him to uphold. In consequence of this Fayetteville Presbytery suspended him from the ministry in 1841. In 1846 he was restored to the ministry, but never had a regular pastorate again. However, he did some

effective evangelistic work afterwards. It was through him that Carolina Church was organized in 1848. He died in 1851 and was buried in Stewartsville Cemetery.

The ceremony of Mr. McQueen's third marriage was performed by Mr. Alex McKinnon, who was a magistrate. Mr. McKinnon was also an elder in Smyrna Church and Clerk of the Session. So after Presbytery suspended Mr. McQueen it directed the Smyrna Session to discipline Mr. McKinnon for the sin of marrying a man to his deceased wife's sister. The Session replied to the next meeting of Presbytery to this effect: Having investigated the case of Mr. McKinnon, the Session finds that he is an officer of the State, and that as such, when a couple present to him a marriage license, it is his duty to perform the ceremony. Therefore, the Session finds that this matter is beyond its jurisdiction. To this the Presbytery responded somewhat after this fashion: Not only is Mr. McKinnon an officer of the State, but he is also an officer of the church—of Smyrna Church; and as such is subject to the discipline of the Session, and if the Smyrna Session does not proceed with the case the Session will thereby subject itself to the severe discipline of the Presbytery. At the next meeting of Presbytery there was a request from the Smyrna Session that Presbytery allow "the case with its attending circumstances to be referred to the Synod of North Carolina for further investigation and ultimate adjudication." The communication was signed by "Alex McRae, Clerk pro. tem." The petition was granted. Apparently the Synod judged favorably to the Session, for shortly afterwards Mr. McKinnon's name is enrolled at a meeting of Presbytery as the representative from Smyrna. Mr. McKinnon was a most honorable and upright man, and it was unfortunate for Presbytery to pursue the matter to this extent.

Rev. Hector McLean succeeded Mr. McQueen for about two years. Following him Rev. Andrew McMillan, whose home was in the bounds of Laurel Hill congregation, supplied the church for eighteen months. In 1846 Smyrna was grouped with Ashpole Church under the ministrations of Rev. A. D. Campbell who remained four years. After him came Rev. Neill McDonald who served as Stated Supply for three years. Owing to a throat affection he removed to Texas in search of health.

In 1857 Rev. James Sinclair, of Allegheny City, Pa., was called to the pastorate of Smyrna and Ashpole. He was a very unpopular minister with the Smyrna people from the start, and deservedly so; for he proved to be a very unworthy man. He resigned the pastorate of Smyrna in 1861, retaining that of Ashpole. In 1865, when charges of a serious nature were pending

against him in Presbytery, he hurriedly departed for the North whence he had come. Nevertheless Presbytery suspended him from the ministry. He returned to this section in Reconstruction days as a carpet-bagger under the employ of the corrupt regime then in authority at Washington. We know nothing of him after that period.

In 1861, at that meeting of Presbytery when the pastoral relation between Mr. Sinclair and Smyrna was dissolved, the following interesting communication came before the Presbytery from Smyrna Session:

"To the honorable Presbytery of Fayetteville: There has arisen among us a difficulty of a peculiar nature, in regard to which we feel the need of your counsel and advice.

"In several meetings of the Session the book of records has not been forth-coming, and upon inquiry, it was ascertained to be in the hands of an absent member of the Session, who, upon application therefor, refuses to give it up upon a plea of a promise to a former pastor of the church.

"Therefore, we memorialize your venerable body for advice. We are aware that by the constitution of the church, we have the power to arraign and try that member of the Session for withholding property belonging to the Session, as well as for contumacy against his brethren.

"But such are the peculiar circumstances of the case growing out of the recent relation of this member to the Session, together with the fact that a minister of the gospel is more or less implicated therein, we have deemed it inexpedient to put in force the right that our book gives us, without the counsel and advice of our brethren of the Presbytery.

"We, therefore, pray your venerable body to instruct us how we shall proceed to recover the rights withheld from us.

"Signed by the following members of the Session:

"Alexander C. McKinnon, John C. Stewart, Alexander McRae, James Q. R. McRae, James Stewart, Angus Fairley, Peter McRae."

Here are the facts in a nut shell: The only member of the Session who did not sign the above communication was Archibald McRae, commonly known as "Big Arch," who was withholding the minute book on the plea of a promise to Mr. Sinclair. Against both of these men there was evidence of a damaging character in the record book; the book has never been seen since; the reader can draw his own conclusion as to who destroyed it! The loss of this record book was a tragedy! For it contained all the records of the church from the beginning of the old Red Bluff down to 1861. The oldest Session book in our possession today dates from 1862.

Rev. Archibald McQueen, Jr., nephew of the Rev. Archibald McQueen, who had ministered to Smyrna in former days, became Stated Supply of Smyrna in August, 1861, remaining in that capacity until early in 1869. Mr. McQueen was an earnest, consecrated man of God, with a distinct evangelistic gift—just the type of preacher needed by the church at that particular time. During the period in which he served Smyrna Church the church increased considerably in numbers. The largest number of members that ever belonged to Smyrna at any one time was in 1864 when the church had 202 persons on the roll, 24 of these being slaves. At one time it is recorded that 22 were added to the church, and at another 28. The latter occasion was in September 1868, and at that time two persons united with the church on profession of their faith in Christ who are still members of our church today—Mr. Norman Stewart and Mrs. Mariah Fairley McIntyre. These are our oldest members, having been serving their Saviour faithfully for 63 years. It was Mr. McQueen's privilege to bring comfort and courage to the hearts of the congregation amid the anxieties, bereavements, and poverty accompanying and following the Civil War. After many years of glorious service in the church militant he joined the church triumphant. His body is buried in the cemetery at Bethel Church.

Rev. Mr. Brearly supplied the pulpit for a few months after Mr. McQueen resigned, and in the latter part of 1869 Rev. Joseph Evans, of Canada, came and ministered to the church for three years. He took up his residence in the old Angus Fairley home within sight of the church. He taught a day school in the church during the time he was pastor. It must be remembered that our country was in abject poverty for several years after the War between the States, and there were few school houses and few persons who were competent to teach. Mr. Evans wrought a good work for this community by his teaching as well as by his preaching, and was able to bring to bear his fine christian personality upon the lives of the young people. He was a deeply spiritual man and an indefatigable worker, visiting frequently in the homes of the people.

It was during his ministry that an organ was used in the church for the first time. Mr. Evans bought it himself and took it away with him when his ministry here was ended. This same instrument is today at Montreat in the home of his daughter, Mrs. Maggie Oliver, and is in a good state of preservation. There was some dissatisfaction in the congregation in regard to the organ because many thought it sinful to use any kind of mechanical instrument as an aid to the worship of God. This idea was soon

dissipated, however, and after Mr. Evans took his organ away the people were not satisfied till they had purchased another. Mrs. Emily Miller was the first organist, followed by Mrs. Mary McRae Buckner, and she in turn by Mrs. W. C. Hamer. In this connection it is well to note that before the organ came into use the hymns were pitched by means of a tuning fork in the hands of a song leader who was called a precentor. As a rule there were few if any song books in the hands of the congregation; so it was customary for the precentor, after he had found the correct pitch, to read out the first two lines of a hymn, and the congregation led by him, would sing those lines, whereupon he would read two more lines, and so on till the entire hymn was sung. This was called "parcelling it out." Some of Smyrna's precentors were Francis Folk, Sr., Archie Ray (grandfather of Mrs. W. H. Stewart), W. H. McMillan (grandfather to W. H. McCormick), James M. Graham, and John L. McRae. Those who remember testify that the singing under those precentors in the days before the organ was superior in quality to that of the present. Certainly the congregational singing was more general and more hearty than now.

Just before the close of Mr. Evans' pastorate, in November, 1872, a series of meetings was held in the church lasting eleven days. The preaching was done by Rev. A. N. Ferguson, who was to become the church's pastor just six weeks later. At this time there were 31 additions to the church. Greatly to the sorrow of the Smyrna people who are devoted to him, Mr. Evans accepted a call to the St. Pauls Church, and departed to that field in December, 1872.

A month later, after a lapse of 30 years, Smyrna again became grouped with Laurel Hill, this time under the ministry of Rev. A. N. Ferguson, who had already been pastor at Laurel Hill for eighteen months. He was never called or installed pastor at Smyrna, acting as Stated Supply during the entire period of his ministry. For several years he had a Sunday afternoon preaching appointment at a place half way between Smyrna and Ashpole. It soon became evident that a church was needed in the community, and a Commission of the Presbytery organized a church there in November, 1889, which the people named "Midway." Thirty of Smyrna's members were dismissed to help form the new organization. This constituted a majority of its charter members. So Midway was more of an outgrowth of Smyrna than of any other church, and through the years that have intervened our people have regarded with pardonable pride Midway's splendid growth until today she is larger than the mother church. Mr. Ferguson

continued to preach at Midway after its organization until the state of his health forced him to give up the work a few years before his death.

Mr. Ferguson's ministry was the longest in Smyrna's history lasting 33 years. At no one time was there any large ingathering of numbers, but accessions were steady, practically all the children of the church coming in as they reached years of accountability. When Mr. Ferguson took charge in 1873 there were 170 members on the roll; by 1895 this number had shrunk to 65; then there was an upward movement so that when he laid down the work there were 90 on the roll. During those years he had received approximately 165 persons into the church, but at the same time had lost 182 by dismissal to other churches or by death. In January, 1898, the congregation celebrated the 25th anniversary of Mr. Ferguson's pastorate in a special service. On this occasion the pastor made a very interesting address, reminiscent in character, at the close of which Mr. I. G. Whitlock, a member of the Session, on behalf of the congregation, presented the minister with a purse of silver as an evidence of the people's esteem. In the course of Mr. Ferguson's address he made this significant remark: "During the 25 years that have passed there has not been at any time very much available material in the bounds of the congregation to draw upon," and dismissals had far out-numbered accessions. That statement reads like a page out of the life of the church for the last six years! Yet the old church is still going strong and facing the future bravely.

The blessings Mr. Ferguson wrought in Smyrna community are not to be measured by figures, but in hearts comforted, encouraged, and made strong for life's battles, and in lives transfigured by contact with him into the likeness of Jesus Christ. In July, 1906, the life of this servant of God was translated "to the general assembly and church of the first born." For 33 years he had pointed men to the glory land. What joy was his when he was ushered into the presence of many whom he had received into the church and of many with whom he had wrought faithfully in the earthly sanctuary.

In January following Mr. Ferguson's death Rev. J. H. Dixon came from the Presbytery of Atlanta to assume the duties of this pastorate. During his term of service the church developed remarkably in the grace of giving. In January, 1917, after a pastorate of 10 years, he resigned and moved to Charlotte, where he entered upon the pastorate of the Tenth Avenue Presbyterian Church.

The pulpit was vacant only two or three months when Rev. F. O.

Hellier, Ph. D., came from a pastorate in Texas and took up the work. About a year later he obtained leave of absence from the church that he might engage in Y. M. C. A. work among the American soldiers. He was installed pastor of the church just on the eve of his departure. Before he left, however, he secured Rev. Dougald McIntyre, D. D., to substitute for him. Dr. McIntyre soon won a large place in the people's hearts by his kindly and sympathetic spirit. Seemingly possessed of unlimited energy he visited the people frequently in their homes. Naturally it was with sincere sorrow that they gave him up in the early Fall of 1919. It was then that Dr. Hellier returned from France and resumed his pastorate. He remained only four months, however, when he accepted a call to Bessemer, Ala.

Dr. Hellier was closely followed by Rev. Frank L. Johnston, D. D., who came in March, 1919. He, also, was an indefatigable worker and richly gifted in qualities of mind and heart. He impressed the people in a marked way with his fine, christian personality. But just when it seemed that he had gotten the work well in hand and was ready to move forward with it God removed him to a higher field of service, his death taking place in June, 1920. With sad hearts a loving people laid him to rest in the cemetery at Laurinburg.

For about a year after Dr. Johnston's death the church had no pastor. Then in July, 1922, answering the unanimous call of the people, Rev. G. F. Kirkpatrick came from a pastorate in Lillington, N. C., and was installed pastor of Smyrna in the same month. He found here quite a number of young people who gave promise of great things for the future, and the whole church was earnestly at work. In 1926 the congregation, recognizing the need of accommodations for its social activities, erected a small edifice just to the east of the church. It has proved to be a most serviceable building in many ways, being used not only for social affairs but also for Sunday School class rooms and Auxiliary meetings. About this time there began an exodus of Smyrna's members to other places; especially have the young people gone from us in a steady stream, seeking an outlet for their talents in more populous centers; many whole families have gone elsewhere because of the distressing economic conditions prevalent in the country districts. Because of these removals and quite a number of deaths, together with the fact that no families have moved into the community to take the place of those who have gone from us, the church has suffered a net loss in membership, the whole number of resident members today being exactly what the total membership was in 1898 when the church celebrated the silver anni-

versary of Mr. Ferguson's pastorate—78. But among those who remain there are choice souls who are loyal, faithful, and generous; so the work goes on. During the nine years of the present pastorate 43 persons have been added to the church, while we have lost 58 by death and dismissal to other churches. Quite a number have moved from the bounds of our congregation but retain their membership in the old church.

Doubtless the first house of worship that old Red Bluff used was a "stand and arbor." These "stands" were numerous in the early days of this country. There were no roads worthy of the name and means of transportation were slow and tedious; so in neighborhoods that were some distance from the church the people would erect brush arbors and ministers would come there and preach. There was such an arbor at the Fields Place, and Mrs. A. B. McElyea, one of the most beloved and widely known members of Smyrna's past, said there was a stand on the present site of Smyrna several years before the church organization was moved to this spot. Many members of Smyrna now living remember seeing the remains of an arbor that stood on the slope of the hill between the church and the creek. These "stands" were not only built in communities where there were no houses of worship, but most of the churches had an arbor nearby to be used at communion seasons when the church building was too small to hold the crowds that would assemble. Communion occasions at Smyrna were attended by large numbers of people from distant churches—from Laurel Hill, Center, and Ashpole—not a few of them walking the entire distance. Preceding these occasions there were usually several days of preaching by a visiting minister. These preparatory services were held in the arbor, but the communion service itself was always held in the church.

Among the Scotch churches before the Civil War it was customary on communion occasions for the Session, at the preparatory service on Saturday, to give each communicant present a "token." The token was a flat piece of metal, either round or square, on which was sometimes stamped the initial of the church's names. Then on Sunday when the elements were passed no one was allowed to commune until he handed the elder the token, thus insuring that only those who were in "good and regular standing in the church" should partake of the elements. This custom prevailed in the early days of Smyrna, reference being made to it in the Sessional records as late as 1870.

Tradition says that across the road from the old Red Bluff Church, on the spot of the present cemetery, there was a "stand and arbor." While the Scotch immigrants to the community soon

learned to speak English they never ceased to love their native speech, the Gaelic. For many years they insisted on their ministers preaching in Gaelic. It is said that the Red Bluff minister would at the morning service preach a sermon in English in the church, and in the afternoon he would preach in Gaelic at the "Stand." The church simply would not hold all the Scotch who would assemble from miles around to hear the gospel in their native tongue.

The first church building on the present site of Smyrna, as already indicated, was erected about 1837. Rev. A. N. Ferguson is authority for the statement that Archibald McRae, afterwards an elder in the church, was chiefly instrumental in securing the funds with which to build this house of worship. The contractor and builder was Col. Donald McQueen, the great grandfather of Hon. L. M. Blue, of Gibson. Of this building Mrs. A. B. McElyea wrote as follows: "I recollect quite distinctly the plan and formation of the old church. It was a large, plain, wooden building, sharp roofed, minus any softening curves within or without, and no Sunday School room or any kind of annex whatever. There were four doors, two at each end; and between the two front doors, stood the pulpit, highly elevated by an exceedingly tall platform, underneath which was a closet with a lock and key wherein were deposited the church books, papers, etc. I cannot give its dimensions, but the pews were very long and very thickly set. A tier of seats in the rear were set apart for the colored slaves, divided from the front by a railing, and every Sabbath occupied by these faithful creatures in their neat Sunday clothes, their dusky faces beaming with joy and religious fervor. At the close of the service for the white congregation the minister, walking down the aisle, took his stand in front of the colored people, and delivered to them a plain, simple gospel to which they paid profound attention." At various times in its history Smyrna Session received quite a number of colored persons into its membership, the last one to join being Richmond McQueen, who was received in 1875.

The second house of worship to be built on this spot was erected early in 1878 during Mr. Ferguson's pastorate. It was located just to the rear of the present building facing east. The actual money cost of this edifice was \$1100. Presbytery met at Smyrna in the Fall of that year, and during the meeting the church was dedicated to the worship of God, Rev. Martin McQueen preaching the dedication sermon. In 1911, while Mr. Dixon was pastor of the church, the present house of worship was built; the old building was sold to a colored congregation. The present building is

attractive in design and appearance, and entirely adequate to the church's needs.

Very few of Smyrna's sons have entered the ministry, though hundreds of her sons and daughters have labored and are laboring in less prominent spheres in the Master's vineyard. Rev. Archibald McQueen, Sr., and Rev. David Fairley were both members of Smyrna until they entered the ministry. Before the Civil War Messrs. John McDonald and D. R. McInnis, members of Smyrna Church, were received under the care of Fayetteville Presbytery as candidates for the ministry. We have not been able to find out who these men were or anything as to their lives after being received under the care of Presbytery. Mr. Charles F. McRae, who will this year take a post graduate course at Union Theological Seminary, attended our Sunday School and was a member of our church until 1921, when he was dismissed by certificate to Midway Church. And while Rev. J. D. Henderson, of the Second Presbyterian Church, Spartanburg, S. C., was never a member of Smyrna Church, he himself says that whatever he is, aside from what his parents have done for him, he owes to Smyrna Church—especially to its Sunday School. He spent the years of his childhood and youth in this community and was a regular attendant at our services. Scores of other men and women have gone out from Smyrna to be officers, Sunday School teachers, and useful workers generally in other congregations. Indeed, in recent years it would seem that Smyrna's chief mission has been to train laborers for other churches. And what greater work could any church do!

On account of the loss of the Sessional records previous to 1862 and some deficiencies in the records since then we are unable to give the dates of service of a number of ruling elders. In the case of some we know when they began to serve, whereas, in the case of others we know only the date they ceased to serve. In the following list we do not include those elders already referred to in this sketch. When the church was moved from the Red Bluff to its present location three elders came with the organization: One was Alexander McKinnon, an uncle of Misses Ella and Anna Graham, and for many years Clerk of the Session; he died about 1874. Another was John McRae, grandfather to Mrs. A. G. Buckner, and in all probability the consecrated and active elder mentioned in connection with Colin Lindsay's pastorate. He died about 1844 and is buried in the Martin graveyard, about a mile north of the church. The third was Alex McRae, Sr., a brother to John McRae, who was ordained in 1823, and served for fifty years, being removed by death in 1873. He, too, was buried in the Martin graveyard.

Shortly after the removal of the church to its present location three other elders were elected: Norman McRae, the grandfather of Norman Stewart, who died in 1850; Daniel C. Stewart, an uncle to J. C. and D. M. Stewart, who are now members of the Session; he moved to the vicinity of Laurel Hill Church about 1841 and served as an elder there for the rest of his life. Then there was Colin McArthur, who died in 1849 and was buried in Stewartsville Cemetery. In addition to these we learn from the minutes of Fayetteville Presbytery that in 1843 John H. McDonald was an elder of Smyrna. Other elders, together with their dates of service as far as we know them, are as follows:

Capt. Lauchlin McLaurin, certainly an elder from 1849 to 1858.

Angus Fairley, in office as early as 1851, died 1864.

John C. Stewart, Sr., in office as early as 1851, dismissed to Pedee Church 1868.

Archibald McRae, in office as early as 1851, died 1880.

Alex McRae, Jr., from about 1861 to 1904.

James Q. R. McRae, in office as early as 1861, died 1880.

Peter McRae, in office as early as 1861, dismissed to Laurinburg in 1891.

James Stewart, in office as early as 1861, died 1899.

Alex J. McQueen, 1863-1891.

Archibald L. McRae, neither of whose dates we know.

John L. McRae, 1880-1881.

James M. Graham,	1891-1922	Hugh C. McColl,	1918-1926
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Colin S. McArthur,	1891-1922	J. D. Stewart,	1918-1927
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I. G. Whitlock,	1880-1915	Cecil Judson Hester,	1926-1929
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The Session at present consists of: John C. Stewart, Jr., elected in 1908; D. M. Stewart, elected in 1908; Dan C. Stewart, elected in 1920; and Carl McColl, elected in 1926. Of these Dan C. Stewart is Clerk of the Session and Carl McColl is Treasurer of the Church.

Information in regard to the former deacons of Smyrna is very meager. The following are their names and dates of service in so far as we know them:

Daniel McCormick, who was dismissed to Laurinburg in 1877.

Daniel McRae, neither of whose dates we know.

Malcolm McRae, in office as early as 1873.

Archibald L. McRae, in office as early as 1870.

James M. Graham, in office as early as 1873, elected elder 1891.

Duncan McCallum, in office as early as 1873, died 1893.

Malcolm W. McColl,	1880-1886	J. B. Whitlock,	? -1912
John L. McRae,	1873-1880		and again, 1918-1921
Colin S. McArthur,	1890-1891	Robert Stewart,	1908-1920
David B. McQueen,	1890-	E. J. Hester,	1908-1927
John C. Stewart, Jr.,	1891-1908	Lacy McLean,	1920-1929

At present we have just three deacons: John B. McColl, elected in 1918; Arch McIntyre, elected in 1924; and Wade McArthur, elected in 1924.

One of the most important features of any church's life is the Sunday School, and Smyrna's Sunday School dates back many years. We do not know when a Sunday School was first established, but the minutes of Presbytery for 1858 show that there were 25 pupils and teachers enrolled that year. Two years later there were 23. No Sunday School is indicated from then until 1870 when there were 55 pupils and teachers. Two years later in 1872 the enrollment had increased to 80—probably the largest number ever enrolled in Smyrna Sunday School. Two factors, we believe, account for the revival and growth of the Sunday School at this time. One was the coming to the church in 1869 of Rev. Joseph Evans and his consecrated and talented co-laborer, Mrs. Evans. Possessed of splendid organizing ability and tireless zeal they laid themselves out in the work of the Sunday School with excellent results. The other factor was this: In 1870 there was added to the church on profession of faith in Christ the name of a man whose personality was destined to shape the life of Smyrna Church more than any other one person ever connected with it; that man, we need scarcely say, was James M. Graham. He was approximately 40 years of age when he was received into the church. A man of humble spirit, altogether unassuming, with nothing whatever of the spectacular about him, he was possessed of a fine, evenly-balanced judgment, refined sensibilities, capable of inspiring the confidence of his fellowmen, a musical voice, and a lover of children; he was a natural leader of men. When such a personality is consecrated to the service of God rich blessings are sure to follow. As soon as he yielded his heart and life to Christ he was elected Superintendent of the Sunday School, which position he filled until he was ushered into the presence of his Saviour in 1922—52 years of faithful service. Not only did he superintend the Sunday School for white people, but also, with the assistance of Mrs. Evans, he organized and conducted a Sunday School in the church for the colored people of the community on Sunday afternoons. Such a Sunday School was all but unique during those reconstruction days when carpetbaggers were trying

to provoke hostility between the two races in the South. Those who are old enough to remember say that the colored people who came to the Sunday School paid undivided attention to the teaching of the Word and in every way conducted themselves with the utmost respect toward their white leaders and reverence for God's house. The membership roll of this colored Sunday School, which has been carefully preserved by Mr. Graham's daughters, shows as many as 53 pupils on the roll at one time. And who knows but that the orderly and law-abiding conduct of the colored people of this community today is due to the fact that God's Word was taught to their parents and grandparents many years ago by those whose lives were consistent with their teachings!

Mr. Graham's daughters have also preserved the enrollment of the Sunday School for the white people of this church and community for the years 1873 to 1875. Some of the teachers then were, J. M. Graham, Mrs. J. M. Graham, Neill McDonald, Mrs. Neill McDonald, and Miss Mag McMillan. Much of the time since then the enrollment has been small, but never has the Sunday School ceased to function. In the Narrative Report of the Session to Presbytery in 1894 we find these words: "Sunday School is regularly maintained at the church, but generally the number in attendance is discouragingly small. This may be accounted for in part by the fact that there are at present comparatively few children within our bounds, and also by the fact that most of those who have reached the age of maturity seem to think, or at any rate, act upon the principle that the Sunday School is an institution suitable only for children." That report of 37 years ago is an accurate description of the condition of Smyrna's Sunday School today or at any time within the past six years. The highest enrollment since 1875 was reached in 1915 when it numbered 67. As a rule the enrollment all through those years has averaged about 25 or 30. Owing to the infirmities of age Mr. Graham was forced to lay aside the active duties of Superintendent two or three years before his death, during which time E. J. Hester substituted for him; after Mr. Graham's death in 1922 Mr. Hester was elected Superintendent and served with fidelity in that position until his death in 1927. Since then Arch McIntyre has fulfilled the duties of this office with faithfulness, never failing to be in his place on the Sabbath. Our teachers at present are: Miss Annie McIntyre, Mrs. Lonnie Smith, Miss Anna Whitlock, Miss Ella Graham, Miss Anna Graham, and Carl McColl, with Mr. Lonnie Smith serving as Secretary-Treasurer.

Besides the Sunday School other organizations have been formed within the church. It seems that about 1875 there was a Y. M. C. A.

here; but of this we can learn nothing. In the annual report of the Session for 1898 mention is made of a "Men's Missionary Society," which that year contributed \$11 to Foreign Missions. There is occasional mention made of this society until 1914, after which all is silence in regard to it. It never functioned satisfactorily.

In 1897 the Session's book shows that "The Children's Missionary Society" had contributed \$5 that year to Foreign Missions. In 1909 this society consisted of nine boys and thirteen girls with Miss Sadie Stewart as President. She continued to be President for several years. In 1914 Ernest McLean was elected President and held that position for several years. The following year (1915) the society reported 38 members and gifts amounting to \$39. It was probably in 1918 that this organization was made a Christian Endeavor Society, and as such it continues to operate. On account of the very small number of young people in the community as well as in the church it is having a struggle to maintain its existence, but with commendable persistence is carrying on. From 1923 to 1927 there was a flourishing Junior Christian Endeavor Society under the supervision at various times of Mrs. Alex Stewart, Miss Kate McLean, and Mrs. D. C. Stewart. On account of an almost total lack of material to work with this organization has ceased to exist.

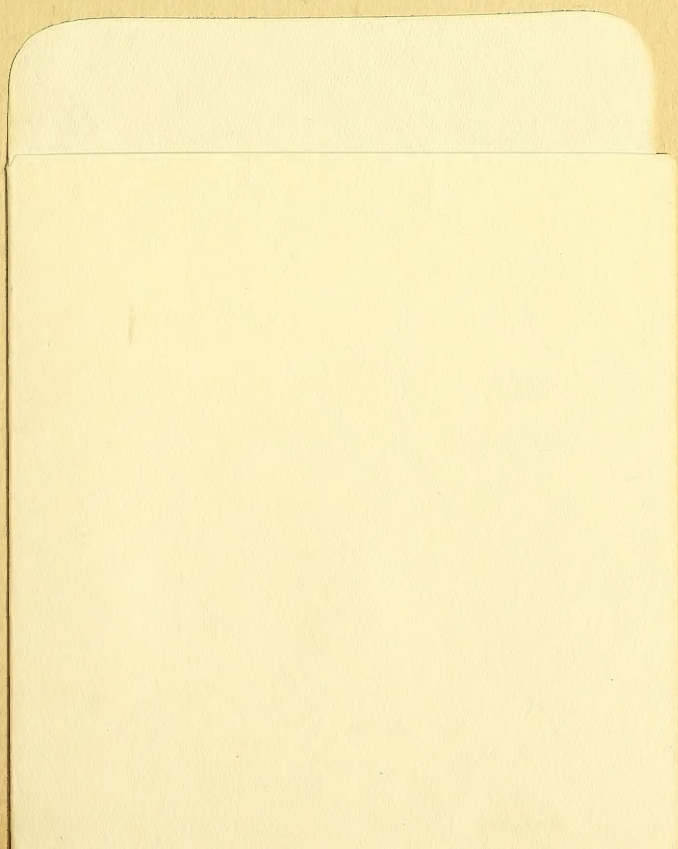
The earliest mention of any organized work among the women of Smyrna Church is found in a blank book in which Mr. Graham kept a record of various matters pertaining to the church. One page in this book records the receipts from the "Mission Society" from June 1st, 1874, to December, 1875, which amounted to \$12. Of this amount \$3 is credited to "The Sewing Society," of which organization we know nothing more. How long this "Mission Society" continued is uncertain. But in 1884 there was organized "The Ladies' Missionary Society," which has had a continuous existence down to the present time. The first officers of this society were: Mrs. Henry McCallum, President; Miss Fannie McRae, Vice-President; Miss Mary McRae, Secretary; and Mrs. Margaret McRae, Treasurer. The Charter members were: Mrs. Margaret McRae, Mrs. Flora A. McRae, Mrs. Peter McRae, Mrs. Henry McCallum, Mrs. Bella McElyea, Mrs. Mag Stewart, Mrs. E. Webster, Miss Katie McRae, Miss Fannie McRae, Miss Ella Graham, Mrs. Maggie Hamer. The object of this society was to stimulate in the members and through them the whole church, an interest in Foreign Missions, and to receive contributions to that cause. During the first year of its existence the gifts amounted to \$15.

In the year 1889 a number of Ladies' Missionary Societies within the bounds of Fayetteville Presbytery banded themselves together in an organization which they called "The Missionary Union." This was the beginning of what later came to be known as "Fayetteville Presbyterial." In September of the following year the Smyrna society identified itself with the Union, and sent Misses Ella Graham and Mary McRae as its first delegates to the meeting of the Union at Maxton. The report sent up by the society to that first session of the Missionary Union was as follows: "Amount forwarded January 1st to September 1st—\$23; members enrolled—13; number of copies of "The Missionary" taken in society—5." By the end of that first year the amount contributed was \$34, all going to Foreign Missions. In 1908 the contributions were \$107, and were divided between Foreign and Home Missions, and the Society had begun clothing an orphan. The number enrolled that year was 30 with an average attendance of 15. By 1915 the society was contributing to practically all the Assembly's Causes. Until 1922 the society had always held its meetings on Sunday afternoons; since then it has met on week days. In that same year the name of the society was changed to "The Woman's Auxiliary." The Auxiliary adopted the Circle plan in 1924, being divided at first into three Circles, but changing later to two. The largest financial report in the 43 years of this society's history was in the year 1927 when it contributed a total of \$547, a large proportion of this going to build and furnish "The Hut." The best all-round report, however, was that which the Auxiliary sent to the Presbyterial in April of this year—a report which entitled it to a gold seal. That report is as follows: Number of members—30; contributions to benevolences—\$339, to local church work—\$9, miscellaneous contributions—\$59, making a grand total of \$407; there are two prayer bands, two mission study classes, and the Auxiliary reached 100% on the "Standard of Excellence." The officers for 1931-1932 are, Miss Margaret McLean, President, Miss Annie McIntyre, Vice-President, and Mrs. D. C. Stewart, Secretary-Treasurer.

This noble band of women has for many years been a source of encouragement and inspiration to the church, not only because of its generous gifts for the promotion of the kingdom of God, but also because of its very persistence in the face of difficulties and its many labors of love.

Since Smyrna first flung out her banner to the breeze more than a century and a quarter ago many marvelous changes have taken place. Our material, educational, and religious advantages are far greater than those of our fore-fathers. But in godliness

of life and stability of character we have not progressed beyond them. If today we could call the roll of Smyrna's sainted dead and each could tell something of the mighty obstacles they overcame, of the long walks and rides through the bitter cold of winter and under the pitiless rays of summer suns that they might enjoy the blessings of the sanctuary, if they could testify of their uncompromising stand for principles of truth and honor, surely we would bare our heads in their presence and thank God that they have lived. These fathers have left us a glorious heritage; such a heritage is a challenge to consecrated character, to holy living, and to heroic achievement. Today our number is smaller than at many times in the past, but we also enjoy advantages and opportunities that our predecessors never dreamed of. So, inspired by the examples of these generations of the past, challenged by the opportunities of the present, let us renew our faith and allegiance to God and our loyalty to the church, throw ourselves into the task committed to us with a holy enthusiasm, and to those who succeed us hand down, unblemished and made perfect, the sacred heritage which has been ours.





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